



## Germany: Facts & Figures February 2006

*A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany*

### Federal Politics

If Bundestag elections were held on February 26, the CDU/CSU would receive 42% of the vote, the SPD 31%, the Green Party 9%, the FDP 8%, the PDS (with WASG) 7%, and all other parties combined 3%. (Infratest. 02/24/06)

### Economy

The unemployment rate increased to 12.2% in February (12.1% in January). 5.048 million people are unemployed, however, this number is 241,000 below the figure of February 2005. (Agentur fuer Arbeit. 02/28/06)

The number of air-passengers embarking or disembarking on German airports in the year 2005 reached 145.9 million, an increase of 6.6% or 10.3 million passengers, compared to 2004. 124.1 million passengers traveled on non-domestic flights (+7.9%), of which 95.7 million went to Europe (+ 8.7%), 5.3 million to Africa (+ 4.2%), 12.3 million to America (+ 5.2%) and 10.6 million to Asia (+5.7%). (Federal Statistical Office. 02/22/06)

Germany wants to provide 25% of the country's energy from renewable resources by 2020. Currently, renewable energy resources have a market share of 4.6%. (Frankfurter Rundschau, 02/17/06)

As of March 1, 2006 all federal employees must work 41 hours per week instead of the previous 40 hours. The government intends to save one billion euros by extending the workweek (savings of EUR 500 million) and by cutting Christmas/ holiday bonuses (another EUR 500 million in savings). (Major papers, 02/16/06)

Economic growth in Germany stalled during the last quarter of 2005. The GDP remained unchanged in the fourth quarter of 2005 compared to the previous quarter's figure of 0.6%. (Federal Statistics Office. 02/15/06)

According to an opinion poll of 25,000 German companies, German trade and industry continues to be very optimistic this year. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) increased its economic growth forecast for 2006 to 2% (up 0.5%), based on the ongoing boom in exports and the increase in domestic demand. It also expects a decline in unemployment number by 200,000. (DIHK. Major papers, 02/16/06)

Tax income of the communities, Länder and federal governments will be 82.2 billion euros higher than expected by 2009. The higher income will derive from the increase in the VAT and the closing of tax loopholes. (Finance Ministry. Major papers, 02/14/06)

Germany exported commodities with a value of EUR 786.1 billion and imported commodities with a value of EUR 625.6 billion in 2005. Exports in 2005 were 7.5% and imports 8.7% above the respective 2004 levels. The foreign trade balance showed a surplus of EUR 160.5 billion in 2005 (2004: EUR 156.1 billion). (Federal Statistical Office. 02/08/06)

Iran has turned into an important trading partner for Germany over the past few years. In the first half of 2005, German exports increased by 37% over the year before and the export volume reached 2.2 billion euros. (FAZ. 02/07/06)

### Society

During the Olympic winter games in Turin, Germany received the most medals overall, with athletes winning a total of 29 medals (11 gold, 12 silver and 6 bronze medals). The second most successful country was the United States with a total of 25 medals (9 gold, 9 silver, 7 bronze). (Olympiade.de, 02/28/06)

48% of Germans consider the nuclear policy and the missile policy of Iran a "great danger" for Europe and Germany, and 12% consider it a "very great danger." 33% said that only "minor danger" is caused by Iran's nuclear and arms program. (Forsa. Die Welt, 02/20/06)

The number of immigrants from German-speaking areas in the former Soviet Union dropped by 67% in 2005. One reason for the decline is the German language test, which the resettlers have to pass before they receive permission to emigrate to Germany. (Sueddeutsche, 02/14/06)

71% of Germans would prefer to work abroad rather than be dependent on Hartz IV or unemployment assistance. 56% would consider leaving Germany permanently or for a lengthy period of time if they cannot find jobs in Germany. 63% would prefer a German-speaking country. (Forsa. Stern tv, Die Welt. 02/06/06)

4 out of the 614 Bundestag members are Muslims, all of them of Turkish origin. (Bild. 02/07/06)